

and his wife, Billie; and Vernon Delpesce, executive director, and David Hoak, chief volunteer officer, YMCA of Greater Des Moines, IA. H.R. 1308, approved October 4, was assigned Public Law No. 108-311. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion in Clive, Iowa

October 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for being here. Please be seated. We've got to get started. I've got some things I want to tell you.

First thing I'm going to tell you is I'm here asking for the vote in Clive, Iowa. I'm enjoying this campaign. It gives me a chance to get out among the people and tell people what I believe and where I stand and where I'm going to lead this country for the next 4 years. I'm here also to ask for your help. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry Iowa and win a great victory in November. *[Applause]* Thank you all.

They tell me I'm the first sitting President ever to visit Clive. I don't know what took all the other ones so long to get here—*[laughter]*—but thanks for being here. I wish Laura were here. Imagine this conversation: "Will you marry me?" "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." *[Laughter]* I said, "Okay." *[Laughter]* Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise, because when people see Laura, they see a strong, compassionate, fine, fine First Lady. I think in the course of the campaign you have to tell people why they should vote for you; that's what I'm here to do. But perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Today I'm going to talk to some of your fellow citizens about why our policies make sense, and I'd like to answer some questions if you have some. Before I do that, I do want to introduce some people traveling with me. First, I do want to thank the next Congressman from the 3d Congressional District, Stan Thompson. He's a good Member, I hope you put him in office. I'm here to tell you he ought to be the next United States Congressman.

I appreciate Members of the U.S. Congress from the Iowa delegation for coming. From the east side of the State, Jim Nussle and Jim Leach, two really fine friends. And I appreciate you all being here. Thanks for coming. Leach is a longtime Member, one of the most decent men you'll ever meet. Chairman Nussle is the chairman of the Budget Committee, making sure that the Iowa taxpayers' monies is well-spent in Washington. I also want to thank Tom Latham from northwest Iowa for being here today. Congressman, thanks for coming. Proud you're here.

And I just signed an important piece of legislation making a lot of the tax relief—extending a lot of the tax relief for 5 years. And I was able to stand on stage with the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Chuck Grassley. He's a good man. He went back to Washington. I told him if he'd suffer through one of my speeches, I'd give him a ride back. *[Laughter]* But he's frugal. *[Laughter]* I also told the people, I said, "I'm really getting to be good friends with Chuck Grassley, for a reason. The south lawn of the White House"—*[laughter]*—"is mighty big, and we're looking for a good mower." *[Laughter]*

I want to thank the State auditor, David Vaudt, for being here. I appreciate you coming, David. I want to thank the Senate president, Lamberti, as well as my friend Stew Iverson, the majority leader. Thank you all for coming. Good to see you all. Big Stew, looking good. Stew has got that same hair style as the Vice President. *[Laughter]*

By the way, I didn't pick the Vice President because of his hair. *[Laughter]* I picked him because he's a man of great judgment, wonderful experience, a guy who can get the job done for the American people.

I want to thank David Roederer, the chairman of the Bush-Cheney campaign. I want to thank all the grassroots activists, the people putting up the signs and making the phone calls and registering the voters. I can't thank you enough for what you're going to do, which is to work as we're coming down the stretch. It really means a lot. It really means a lot.

I'm running because I want this country to be a safer country and a more hopeful

country. I understand that we're living in changing times, and the institutions of Government must change with those times. See, my philosophy of Government is that Government ought to help people realize the great opportunities of our country, not tell you how to live your lives. There's a fundamental difference in this campaign about Government philosophy.

When I say "changing institutions," I'm talking about the labor laws need to change with the times. Think about this fact: 30 years ago, most women stayed at home; today, most women are working inside the house and outside the house. Yet the labor laws reflect yesterday, not tomorrow. I believe the labor laws ought to change and have flex-time for workers, so that they can better manage their families and their workloads.

The retirement systems were designed for yesterday. I believe they ought to be designed for tomorrow. Let me tell you about my plans for Social Security. First of all, you might remember the campaign in 2000. Latham reminded me of it. When they were running, they said, "If George W. gets elected, he's going to take away your Social Security check." Remember those ads? Well, you remind your friends and neighbors, you got your check. That's the same old stale political rhetoric. You'll hear it again this time too. And baby-boomers, we're in good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But it's the youngsters who have to pay for the baby-boomers' retirement we better worry about. That's why I believe we ought to allow young workers to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account that will earn better interest than the Social Security trust today, so they can be able to more likely get the benefits of the Social Security System, a personal savings account they call their own, a personal savings account they can pass on to their kids or grandkids, and a personal savings account that the Government will not take away.

We've got to make sure that our worker training programs work. They were designed for yesterday. They need to be designed for tomorrow. Listen, in this changing world of ours, it requires—oftentimes requires new skills. These jobs are new jobs, the jobs of the 21st century. Just look at the health care

industry. It's a booming part of our economy, yet, oftentimes, people don't have the skills necessary to fill those jobs. So one of the things Government must do is make sure the Workforce Investment program works, make sure there's access to our community college system, expand Pell grants, and expand Government help for workers.

This is the kind of thing that is necessary to make sure people have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. And do you realize that most new jobs in America now require at least 2 years of college, yet one in four of our students gets there? And that's why it's essential we keep working on No Child Left Behind, to make sure every child has got the skills necessary to read and write and add and subtract.

I'm looking forward to discussing No Child Left Behind with the American people. You might remember, there were times when they would just move kids through school, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. I don't think that's right. That's what I call—that's why I went to—when I say I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, that's what I'm talking about. Expectations were so low that they just moved kids through. We've changed that. We're raising the bar. We believe in local control of schools, but we're now saying, "In return for increased Federal spending, measure. Show us whether or not a child can read. Let's correct problems early, before it is too late."

We've got to stop this business about shuffling kids through school, and we are. There's an achievement gap in America that's beginning to close, but there's more to be done. I believe we ought to have intermediate help programs for at-risk students in high school. We ought to emphasize math and science. We ought to expand Pell grants for low- and middle-income families. We want more of the kids graduating from college being able to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's how you make sure this country is a hopeful place.

In changing times, it helps to own something. It brings stability to your life. I'm proud of the fact that homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America under my administration. And so we got plans to make

sure homeownership is spread to every corner of America.

Speaking about ownership, it helps when somebody owns their own health care account in changing times. There's a big difference of opinion about health care in this campaign. I believe the decisions ought to be made by you and your doctor. My opponent believes that the Federal Government ought to be making your decisions.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. That's what I call—he's got a system that's creeping toward "Hillary Care." [Applause]

I got a commonsense, practical way of making sure health care is available and affordable. I'm a big believer in community health centers. That's where the poor and the indigent can get primary and preventative care. I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center to make sure health care is available for people. I believe we ought to make sure that the children's health care program for low-income families is fully subscribed.

To make sure health care is affordable, I want to help the small businesses afford health care. Do you realize 50 percent of the uninsured today work for small businesses? Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. I believe they ought to be allowed to pool risk with other small businesses so they can afford insurance at the same discount big businesses get.

I believe in health savings accounts, individualized health savings accounts that provide for catastrophic care and tax-free savings for routine medical costs. It's a plan that you own. When you change jobs or if you change jobs, you take your health care with you—with wherever you go. These are innovative, commonsense ways to make sure that health care is available and affordable.

I'll tell you another thing we need to do about health care costs. We've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the costs on small businesses. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. [Laughter] I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

Let me talk about Medicare right quick. I went to Washington to fix problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents. I thought Medicare needed to be fixed. It's a very important program. Yet, as medicine modernized, Medicare was not modernizing with it. And I'll give you an example. Medicare would pay \$100,000 or so for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors. It did not make any sense for the taxpayers. So I worked with Democrats and Republicans to modernize Medicare, and starting in 2006, our seniors will get a prescription drug benefit in Medicare. And today, our seniors can sign up for a drug discount card; 4.4 million seniors have done so in order to derive substantial savings at their local pharmacies.

We're making a difference when it comes to health care. But all we do to make sure health care is available and affordable, we'll make sure the decisionmaking is between patient and doctor, not between bureaucrats in the Nation's Capital.

It's important to make sure America is a hopeful place, by growing our economy. I want you to tell your friends and neighbors and remind them what we have been through. The stock market was in significant decline prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. That was an indicator that something was taking place in the economy, and sure enough, we had a recession. And the recession hurt us, but so did the corporate scandals. You know, our economy is based upon trust. And when some of our citizens didn't tell the truth, it shook our confidence and hurt our economy. We passed tough laws, and that made it abundantly clear that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

And then the attacks hurt us. And then we got attacked. On September the 11th, 2001, our Nation was brutally attacked, and those attacks cost us a million jobs during the 3 months after September the 11th. Think about what we've been through as an economy, recession, attack, corporate scandal. And yet, the economy is strong, and it's getting strong. It's growing at rates as fast as nearly in any 20 years. Your great State

of Iowa has got a farm economy that's really strong. Unemployment rate in this State is 4.5 percent. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

And people say, "How did it happen? How did we get out of this recession so quickly?" One reason is, we've got great workers. Secondly, the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. More and more people are owning their own small business. Thirdly, we had well-timed tax cuts. Those tax cuts left more money in the hands who earned it. People had more money to spend.

The tax cuts also helped to stimulate the job creators. Not only did we help to stimulate demand, but we helped to stimulate the job creators. See, 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. Ninety percent of small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax rate, because they're either Subchapter S corporation or a sole proprietorship; those are legal terms which basically mean they pay an individual income tax. And so when you cut individual income taxes on everybody who pays taxes, you're really helping our small businesses. And when you help the small businesses, you help the job creators. And when you help the job creators, somebody is more likely to find work. We've added 1.7 million jobs since August of 2003. The tax relief plan is making a difference.

And there's a difference in taxes in this campaign. There's a big difference. I've lowered taxes, and my opponent wants to raise taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You may have noticed, he changes positions quite frequently—[laughter]—but not on taxes. [Laughter] During his 20 years in the Senate, he's voted to raise your taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, all of a sudden, he's saying, well, he's for a middle class tax relief. Except he voted against raising the child credit. He voted against reducing the marriage penalty. He voted against creating a 10-percent bracket, which helps low-income Americans. Plus, he's proposed \$2.2 trillion in new Federal spending. And so how—they asked him, "How are you going to pay for

it?" And he said, "Oh, I'll just tax the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we?

Well, I want you to remember one thing. We're about to talk to a businessowner that will be affected by the so-called tax-the-rich policy. If most small businesses pay individual income taxes and you raise the top two brackets, you're taxing job creators. And that's bad economic policy, to be taxing the people who are creating the new jobs. If you want more jobs, you keep people's taxes low, not run them up.

If you propose 2.2 trillion, and you only raise a little over 600 billion by raising the top two brackets, there's a gap. [Laughter] Two-point-two trillion in spending, a little over 600 billion in revenues raised, means you've got to fill the hole. You've got to find additional taxes if you're going to fulfill your promises. And guess who ends up paying? Every time somebody out of Washington makes the promises and falls short of being able to raise the revenues, they're going to tax the middle class every single time, aren't they?

Let me tell you one other problem he has with that. He says, "Oh, I'm just going to tax the rich." Well, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason; that's to stick you with the tab. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to carry Iowa and the country in November.

A couple other points I want to make and then I want to talk to some of our citizens. It's one thing to have overcome obstacles and get the economy growing, the fundamental question is, what do you intend to do to keep it growing? Now that we're on the track to recovery, how do you make sure the recovery is lasting? Here are some ideas for you.

In order to make sure jobs stay here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations. My opponent's plans increase regulations. I believe in providing regulatory relief. If you want to keep jobs here in America, there needs to be fewer frivolous lawsuits that make it hard for employers to expand the job base.

If we want to keep jobs here in America, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. You can't have a growing economy unless we have a reasonable energy plan, an energy plan that

encourages conservation, that provides money for research and development, so that we can develop alternative sources of energy, an energy plan that relies upon ethanol and biodiesel to help us become less dependent on foreign sources of energy, an energy plan that uses technology so we can burn the coal of our country, an energy plan which encourages the exploration for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. To keep jobs here, we must become less dependant on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets. One reason Iowa's farmers are doing so well—I fulfilled a promise. I said, "If you let me be President, I'll work to make sure you can sell your crops anywhere in the world," and it's making a difference. We're selling a lot of soybeans to China. And that's the task of the President.

See, you'll hear some talk about, you know, reviewing trade agreements. That's really kind of hinting about economic isolationism. That makes no sense for Iowa workers and farmers and small-business owners. It makes no sense to wall ourselves off from the world. What we ought to be doing is opening up markets. We've opened up our markets for foreign goods, and it's good for you. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get what you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the market works. So what the President ought to be doing is what I'm doing, which is saying, "China, you treat us the way we treat you," saying to the world, "Open up your markets the way we've opened up our markets." And I'm saying that with confidence because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

One thing I forgot to mention about the Medicare Plan that Chuck and I worked on, along with the Members of Congress, is that we understood, under Medicare Iowa's hospitals weren't being treated fairly. I remember that clearly when I campaigned here in 2000. When I was knocking on doors, I can remember a lot of the citizens here were saying, "Now, if you get up there, do something about the rural hospitals. Make sure Iowa's hospitals are treated fairly." I delivered. So did Chuck Grassley. So did these Members

of Congress. Iowa's hospitals are being treated fairly under the new Medicare law.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to keep people's taxes low. We need to make sure the tax relief we pass is permanent. Today I signed a piece of legislation that extended the child credit, marriage penalty, and the 10-percent bracket for 5 more years.

And we're about to talk to a family. Bobbi and Ricardo Ramirez are with us. Thanks for coming. I've asked them to join us because I want you to hear their story. You know a lot of times, politicians talk or economists talk about tax relief this, tax relief that—but I always think it's good to put a face on it. Let people know exactly what the tax relief has meant.

What do you do? What do you all do?

Bobbi Ramirez. My husband works for Knapp Properties. He's a residential maintenance worker, and I'm a stay-at-home mother.

The President. Very good. And how many kids we got?

Mrs. Ramirez. We have three girls.

The President. There they are. Hi, girls. Good to see you. Thanks for coming. And so tax relief?

Mrs. Ramirez. Tax relief has been a huge blessing for us.

The President. How much did you save?

Mrs. Ramirez. We saved about \$1,700.

The President. Yes. That's probably not a lot when you're working up in Washington. [Laughter] It's a lot for this family. It's their money to begin with.

What did you do? What did you do with the money?

Mrs. Ramirez. We were able to use the money mostly for our children, to be able to get them school clothes and school supplies and extracurricular activities that maybe we normally would not have been able to do, like softball and dancing and things like that.

The President. Yes. They were able to use the money so they could do their job as a mom and dad. When you think about it, they were able to fulfill—begin to fill ambitions for their family. That's what tax relief means. It not only helps the economy—just remember they said, "We were able to go out and

buy some school supplies.” Well, when somebody shows up to buy school supplies, it means somebody has got to make those school supplies. Somebody makes them; somebody is going to work. But equally importantly, these people with more money were able to begin to realize dreams for their children. Tax relief was important.

You also did something with your home.

Mrs. Ramirez. We did. We refinanced our home, and we were able to—in the amount that we saved for interest, we didn’t raise our monthly payment, but we were able to build on and put an addition onto our home.

The President. Right, and refinancing their home—low interest rates, good fiscal policy meant they were able to improve their home. Nothing better than hearing somebody stand up and say, “I’m improving my home. This is my piece of property.” That’s what the American experience is all about, isn’t it? And tax relief helps.

Do you realize that had we not extended the tax relief, this good family would have paid \$600 additional in taxes last year—next year? See, that’s \$600. The fundamental question in this campaign is, who do you want spending the people’s money? Now, look, I think we need to set priorities. That’s why I work with Chairman Nussle, to set priorities. But I believe that after we fund our priorities, the Ramirez family can spend their money better than the Federal Government can.

I’d like to—Jeff Henning is with us. Jeff, thanks for coming.

Jeff Henning. Good afternoon, Mr. President.

The President. Straight out of Johnstown, Iowa. [Laughter]

Mr. Henning. Close, Mr. President.

The President. Good to have you.

Mr. Henning. You too.

The President. You run what?

Mr. Henning. Henning Construction Company.

The President. Henning Construction Company. That’s—since your name is Jeff Henning, I presume you own it.

Mr. Henning. Yes, I own the store. [Laughter]

The President. That’s good. Did you start it?

Mr. Henning. My grandfather started the business in 1924.

The President. Oh, fantastic. Isn’t that interesting? And so give me a sense of the business.

Mr. Henning. We are general contractors. As I say, we have four generations. Our business and our customers have come to us as a result of the tax bonus act and said, “We need to make investment. We want to take advantage of this.” Therefore, our business has grown by 60 percent this year.

The President. See, what he’s saying is, is that part of the Tax Code incented small businesses to invest. If they invested, they got tax relief. Investment means spend money. And so one of the things they spent money on, I take it, was something you had to build.

Mr. Henning. That’s correct. We build buildings and equipment for our customers, and we had to make substantial investments, ourselves, in order to equip those troops to do that work.

The President. Yes. So what did you buy?

Mr. Henning. We bought forklifts, equipment, trucks, vehicles—

The President. Somebody had to make them. See, here’s how the economy works. Good tax policy says to Jeff or his customers, invest. And when he invests, somebody has to make the product he buys. And so it has a ripple effect. And we’d rather that ripple effect be done in the private sector. That’s what we’re beginning to see in this country.

Have you hired anybody?

Mr. Henning. Yes, we have. We’ve hired 56 people additional this year.

The President. This year? [Applause] Yes. All of them live in Johnstown?

Mr. Henning. No, Mr. President, they’re all over the United States of America.

The President. Really? This guy has got quite a far reach. [Laughter] He is a intercontinental businessman. [Laughter] Let me ask you this: You were talking to me about your concerns about the death tax, why?

Mr. Henning. Well, Mr. President, we just went through some estate planning. We have two daughters in the business, and in order for us to be able to pass this on, they would have to sell the business if something happened, if we didn’t take care of it.

The President. See, this is a problem in America, and we're about to talk to a farmer who can relate to it as well. But it's a problem when you've got a family-owned business and the Tax Code forces you to sell it. I think we need to simplify the Tax Code, and one way to simplify it is to get rid of the death tax forever.

Good job. Oh, wait a minute. I got one other point. Hold on. I got one other thing to tell you about this good man. He's an S corp. That's one of those companies that pays taxes at the individual income-tax rate.

Mr. Henning. That's correct.

The President. Yes, see, I wasn't making it up. [Laughter] And so when you hear them say "tax the rich," think about Jeff. That's the so-called rich. He hired 54 people this year. And I'm going to tell you, when they start taking money out of employers' pockets, like him, he's going to be less likely to hire somebody. If we want to keep this job—this recovery growing and people being able to find work, we should not be taxing Jeff Henning's company. We ought to be encouraging his company to expand and grow. [Applause] Thank you.

And my opponent doesn't understand that. Either he doesn't understand it, or he doesn't care, because he wants more money for the Federal Government.

Let's talk to Craig Lang. Yarrabee Farms, straight out of Brooklyn, and I'm talking Brooklyn, Iowa. [Laughter]

Craig Lang. Yes, that's right.

The President. Thanks for coming.

Mr. Lang. Thank you.

The President. Tell us about your farm.

Mr. Lang. Well, I'm fifth generation farmer. My great-great grandfather walked from Ohio to Brooklyn, Iowa, back in 1860, and we've had that farm in our family ever since. And we not only own it; we also operate it.

The President. That's good, yes. How's the farm economy?

Mr. Lang. It's great. It was wonderful to hear you talk about world trade—in Iowa, 30 percent—everything that the farmer produces in Iowa is sold somewhere outside of our borders. It's just absolutely important that we're competitive as farmers in the world market, and your administration is allowing us to do that.

The President. Actually, our administration is creating the conditions for somebody who knows what they're doing to be able to succeed. We can't make you succeed. That's up to you. All we can do is create the conditions, the opportunity, by opening up markets and have good tax policy. Did the tax policy help you?

Mr. Lang. That's right, the reduction tax policy, the income expensing, all those things have been very important this year. We've had one of the best years—my brother, my father, and myself. In fact, it's been such a great year that we're—right now we're working with an attorney and CPA and insurance agent—

The President. That's a heck of a year if you've got to hire an attorney. [Laughter]

Mr. Lang. —to make sure that at the time of a death, that the estate taxes aren't a burden on our family, so the next generation beside me can have the opportunity to operate that farm too.

The President. Yes, see, that's a problem, isn't it? Here's a good man who is trying to figure out ways to pass his farm on, so he has to hire a lawyer and an accountant to do it. And again, this is where the death tax makes a huge difference. And people have got to understand out there listening that if you own a farm, sometimes you don't have much liquidity. And in order to pay the tax, you actually have to sell the farm in order to be able to pay the tax.

I hope that's an unintended consequence of the fellows who wrote the death tax years ago, but it's a lousy consequence. And that's why we got to get rid of this death tax. We want farms to stay family to family, if that's what the owners choose to do. We want people to make decisions. I appreciate you.

Finally, Hank Evans is here. Hank, thanks for coming. We've got a mike headed your way. You are the owner of?

Hank Evans. A.F. Johnson Millwork Company.

The President. And where are you? Des Moines—right here.

Mr. Evans. We're in West Des Moines.

The President. Very good, thanks for coming. What do you do?

Mr. Evans. We custom build architectural millwork, and we build things like teller lines, reception desks, and nurses stations.

The President. Really?

Mr. Evans. Store fixtures.

The President. Must we doing well—a lot of nurses.

Mr. Evans. It's been a good year, sir.

The President. A couple of points that we want to talk to Hank about is, one, he's concerned about the health care costs of his company. At least you told me you were, backstage.

Mr. Evans. Yes, Mr. President, our health care has gone up about 20 percent on average over the last half dozen years. A number of years ago, through the Association of Business and Industry, we had a group health plan for all the members of that association, 2,000 of them.

When the law changed, we were no longer able to do that, and as a result the level of health care we've been able to offer is not only had the cost has gone up, but the quality has gone down. We would love to see the ability for that association to again offer health care. It would allow us hire and attract and keep better workers and offer them a better plan.

The President. Right. Was this a health care association plan just for Iowa?

Mr. Evans. It was, yes, the Iowa Association of Business and Industry.

The President. Basically what he's saying is—and here is what we're talking about, see—a stand alone purchaser of health, like Hank, means he's not going to be able to afford a policy relative to being able to have others bid with him. In other words, the more people you have to spread risk, the lower the cost of your insurance is going to be. That makes sense, doesn't it? And so if you're a smaller business and stand-alone trying to purchase insurance in the marketplace, it's going to be a lot higher than if you had others to share the risk with you. And here in Iowa, evidently, you had the capacity to do that, but law changed.

Mr. Evans. Yes, it did.

The President. Yes. See, what I believe we need to do is let Hank and his company pool with people not only in Iowa but in other States. The bigger the pool, the less

costly the insurance. But Federal law won't let us do that now. And my opponent doesn't want that to happen. I think it makes sense to have it happen, because I want Hank making the health care decisions. I don't want there to be a great Federal pool.

He's done something else very interesting. Remember I was talking about making sure the workforce training programs work, actually mean something. Explain what you've done. This is a fantastic story.

Mr. Evans. Well, trying to find cabinet-makers is about like trying to find hens teeth, Mr. President. They're very scarce.

The President. Really? [Laughter]

Mr. Evans. We've had difficulty for years finding good workers. So about 3 years ago, we went to the local community college, DMACC, up in Ankeny, and we set up on an architectural millworker training program. It's a year-long program. We're training 16 kids a year now to be architectural millworkers and cabinetmakers.

The President. Isn't that something? Community colleges are great. I'll tell you something really interesting. Think about the attractiveness of the community college system: Curriculum change if need be. In other words, if there's a demand for workers, the community college can change curriculum or adapt curriculum or come up with curriculum necessary to train those workers for the jobs which actually exist. And all of a sudden, here you have an employer that says, "I'm going to be creative. I'm going to work with the local education institute to help people get the skills necessary to actually work."

In the old days, some of these worker training programs, they'd train people for jobs which didn't exist. Now we got an opportunity to train people for jobs which actually exist. And that's why I'm going to ask Congress to spend \$250 million to make sure industry-type programs with community colleges are expanded. People want to work. They don't have the skills sometimes, and we can do—provide skills in a creative way, just like Hank has done, so people can realize their dreams here in this country.

Thanks for coming.

Mr. Evans. Thank you.

The President. I want you to know that in changing times, some things don't change,

the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. [Applause]

Okay, a couple of other points. I got some other things I got to tell you. I just saw somebody stand up with an "Army Wife for Bush" shirt. I'm going to talk about—[applause]—thank you. That's what I want to talk about, a safer America. My most solemn duty is to protect you. My most solemn obligation as the President is to do everything in our power to prevent harm to the American people.

You know, as I was campaigning here in 2000, I never dreamt that we'd be attacked the way we were. Nobody asked for this attack in America. But since they came, we're going to deal with it. I want to share some thoughts with you. Let me share some thoughts with you.

Let me share some thoughts with you about what I have learned and what I hope the country has learned. First of all, we're dealing with an enemy that has no conscience. Today, if you noticed, there was a car bomb near a school. These people are brutal. They—they're the exact opposite of Americans. We value life and human dignity. They don't care about life and human dignity. We believe in freedom. They have an ideology of hate. And they're tough, but not as tough as America. It's really important for people to understand, you cannot negotiate with these people; you cannot hope for the best. We must—we must chase them down all around the world, so we do not have to face them here at home. That's the lesson number one: Be relentless and determined; never yield.

Secondly, that this is a different kind of war that requires a different kind of strategy. And it's really important for you to realize that these people—their ambition is beyond just a single attack. Their ambition is to take over countries from which they can spread their ideology of hate. That's why they were in Afghanistan. They're like a parasite, hope-

fully being able to overcome a weak host, and they were in the process of doing that.

And so I laid out a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist." Now, when the President says something, I believe the President must speak clearly, and when he says something, he must mean what he says. I meant what I said, and thanks to our military, the Taliban got routed.

Now, let me tell you about the Taliban. Their vision was so dark that many young girls were not allowed to go to school. It's hard for people in America to imagine that, but that's the way it was. And if their mothers or if the women of that country didn't toe the line, they'd be taken out into the public square and whipped or killed. These people were barbarians. And by routing them out, by toppling their government, not only did we deny Al Qaida a safe haven, but we have liberated people.

And I want you to hear this statistic. I think it's one of the most powerful statistics of the 21st century. Because we acted, 10 million citizens in that country, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the October 9th Presidential election. Amazing, isn't it? It's an amazing statistic. The way I like to describe it is people are emerging from darkness to light because of freedom. And it's in our interest that Afghanistan be free. It's in our interest that we have an ally in the war on terror. It's in our interest that we have a model of freedom in a part of the world where freedom is desperately needed.

The third lesson is, when we see threats, we must deal with them before they fully materialize. When we see a threat—see, in the old days, we'd see a threat, and we'd say, "Well, maybe this threat will—we need to deal with, or maybe we don't." But we never thought it would come to hurt us. Every threat now must be taken seriously. We scan the world, watching very carefully. If our job is to protect you, then we just got to watch every threat seriously.

And we saw, I saw, my administration saw—Congress saw, by the way—a unique threat in Saddam Hussein. You know, at the time, we thought he had stockpiles of weapons. Everybody did. Since then we have

found that he has had the capability of making weapons. And here's the danger. Saddam Hussein was a sworn enemy of America. We had been to war with Saddam Hussein before. Saddam Hussein was a source of great instability in a volatile part of the world. Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons. At the time, of course, we knew he had used them, so we knew he had that mindset. Since then we've discovered he had the capability. And we knew that he had terrorist connections. Saddam Hussein—here's the danger. Saddam Hussein could have shared that capability of weapons of mass destruction with the enemy. And that's a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

We have a difference of opinion in this campaign. My opponent calls Iraq a "great diversion" from the war on terror. I strongly disagree. The reason why Zarqawi is fighting so hard—why this terrorist is fighting so hard, is because he understands the stakes. A free Iraq will be a devastating blow for the ideologues of hate. He's called it a "diversion" from the war on terror. I call it a battle in the war on terror.

You cannot be the Commander in Chief of this country and tell those fine troops in Iraq that they're participating in a "grand diversion" from the war on terror. You can't be the Commander in Chief and lead those troops and at the same time say, "Wrong war, wrong place, wrong time."

No, we have a difference of opinion. My opponent said that—in the debate—I didn't say this; he said it—that we must pass a "global test" before we commit troops into harm's way.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Think about that now. Our most solemn duty is to protect you. Can you imagine taking an international poll of nations to determine whether or not we need to protect you?

I'll tell you what's was really interesting, in 1991, when my dad was President, he saw a threat, and that was that Saddam Hussein was going to overrun Kuwait. And he went to the Congress and the United Nations and put together a vast coalition that I think

under any scrutiny would pass the "global test." My opponent voted against authorizing the use of force in 1991. So now he says, you know, Iraq would have been a—Iraq is a mistake, and voted against 1991—that means Saddam would not only have been in his palaces, that means he would have been in Kuwait as well. The policies of my opponent are dangerous for world peace. If they were implemented, they would make this world not more peaceful but more dangerous.

In Iraq we're going to have elections in January. In Iraq we're training people, Iraqis, so they can do the hard work of defending themselves. We're training and equipping army, national guard, police, border patrol. I don't know if you've seen any newspapers recently, but in Samarra, the Iraqi soldiers performed brilliantly. Slowly but surely, they're getting the confidence and the training necessary for them to do the hard work. That's our strategy. They're willing to fight for freedom, and they need the help to do so. In Iraq we're going to spend money to help them rebuild that society. In Iraq we'll continue to work with our friends and allies, and we've got a great coalition. You can't lead a coalition by saying to the leaders of those countries, "Join me for the wrong war." [Laughter]

As a matter of fact, my opponent—in the debate they said—he kept saying, "I've got a plan." If you listen carefully to it, the plan was to call a summit. I've been to summits. You don't bring terrorists to justice at summits. I can imagine him walking in to the leaders of the world saying, "We need your help, but Iraq is a mistake. We need your help. Commit your troops into harm's way for the wrong war at the wrong time and the wrong place." He has no plan. A summit won't solve the problem. Strong consistent leadership is what this world needs. [Applause] Thank you all.

Two other points, real quick. I'm not trying to filibuster. [Laughter] Two points, to the Army wife, I say to you, one, thank you for your husband's sacrifice. And I—[applause]—hold on for a minute. You're filibustering. And we owe you and your loved one the full support of the Federal Government. And that's why I went to the Congress to

ask for \$87 billion of funding. And it was important funding. It was funding that would give our troops that which they needed for combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq. And the bipartisan support was overwhelming for the funding. Think about this fact: Only four United States Senators voted for the authorization of force and against funding the troops—only four—two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him about the vote, and he issued the famous quote of the campaign, “I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it.” [Laughter] And they pressed him. He’s given about five different answers on the vote. He said, well, he was proud of the vote. Then he said, “It was a complicated matter.” [Laughter] And then he said that it was a protest vote. On national TV, he said, “Well, that vote was a protest vote.” Think about somebody who wants to be the Commander in Chief saying that he’s going to vote against important support for the troops in combat and calling it a protest vote. Finally he said, oh, his vote—the other night on the debate, he said, “Well, the vote was a mistake.” No, what was a mistake—he said, “What I said was a mistake.” No. What he said wasn’t the mistake. His vote was the mistake.

Finally, let me share with you about my beliefs on liberty. I believe liberty has got the ability to transform societies. I do. And I believe that because I’m watching it happen in Afghanistan. But also I spend time with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi. He’s an interesting guy. I saw him at the United Nations recently when I was up in New York, and I said, “I’m telling people all across the country about our relationship. Do you mind?” He said, “No.” I didn’t tell him I was going to tell you that Elvis is his favorite singer. [Laughter] It’s true. [Laughter]

Think about this story, though—think about what I’m telling you. It wasn’t all that long ago that my dad and your dads or granddads were fighting the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. And after World War II, after we won, Harry Truman believed that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally. That’s what he believed. And I bet there was a lot

of skepticism, don’t you? There was a lot of heartache, lot of anger at the Japanese. “Why help them, you know. They killed some of our sons. Why do we care?” But Harry Truman cared, because he had a vision that was a long-term vision about world peace. People in America cared, because they have deep faith in the values that makes us a unique nation. As a result of Harry Truman’s faith in liberty, I now sit down at the table with the leader of a country that was a sworn enemy, talking about the peace we all want. Think about that. Think about what liberty can do.

People like Zargawi know the power of liberty, and that’s why they’re resisting. He’s got one weapon. They can’t whip our military. He’s got one weapon. His weapon is to shake our conscience. His weapon is to conduct such horrific acts against innocent people that America loses its will and our faith in liberty to change the world is shaken. My faith in liberty will not be shaken. I understand what we’re doing has got a chance to change the world for the better. Someday, when we achieve our goal in Afghanistan, which is helping this country get up to be a democracy, someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader from Iraq, talking about the peace, talking about how to keep the peace in a troubled part of the world. And our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I want to thank you all for giving me the chance to share with you why I’m running. See, I believe somebody running for office can’t just sit on their laurels. They’ve got to talk about what they are going to do. I’m here to tell you America will be a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place when you send me and Dick Cheney back into office for 4 more years.

All right, let me see if we got some time for some questions. I’m ready to take some questions if anybody has got a question. Yes, sir, holding the child right there. [Applause] Thank you all.

Freedom of Religion

Q. Mr. President, first, we just want to tell you that we pray for you every night, as our President.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. We thank God that we live in a representative republic, that we're able to home-school our children, and—a fact that we're sharing with Leon Mosley the other night at the Christian Coalition dinner what we're teaching our children about a representative republic, and he said maybe my little 7-year-old should come down here and share it with you. Can you tell the President what Noah Webster said about our republic?

Participant. It would do our system well to learn at an early age that the correct principles of our republic is the Holy Bible, the New Testament, and Christianity.

The President. Thank you. Let me say something about religion. Let say something about religion. First of all, that was well done. Here's the strength of America. You can worship or not worship, and be equally patriotic. That's the strength of this country. Think about it. A free society—a truly free society is one in which people can worship the Almighty God or choose not to worship the Almighty God, and you're free to do so. And you're just equally an American, no matter what choice you make.

Let me tell you something else. If you choose to worship the Almighty, you're equally an American if you're a Christian, Jew, or Muslim. That's the strength of America. It's essential that we maintain that strength. Thank you for your prayers. Amazing nation when they pray for the President and his family. It strengthens us and sustains us, and for that, I'm really grateful. I appreciate it a lot.

All right, anybody got a question out here? Yes, ma'am.

Medicare

Q. Why is Medicare—[inaudible].

The President. She asked about Medicare going up 17 percent. I'll give you the answer right now. First of all, because there was a formula fixed by the United States Congress in 1996. This wasn't the administration saying, "Raise it." This went up because of a formula that my opponent voted for, for example. Secondly, because the cost for doctors went up. In other words, when they reimbursed doctors more for Medicare, your premium went up. Thirdly, it went up because

there are additional benefits that you're going to realize as a result of the law we passed, preventative medicine. And it's the first time ever that Medicare—you as a Medicare patient can get a screening and preventative care. Never has that been done before, and now we've got it in the new law. In '06, you're going to get a drug benefit. But those are the reasons why. Thanks for asking.

Yes, sir.

Timing of Troop Withdrawal From Iraq

Q. [Inaudible]—my son was able to serve in Iraq, and by the grace of God has come home safe.

The President. Fantastic. Thank you. What branch of service?

Q. He's in the Army.

The President. Army. Good.

Q. My question is, is when can other parents rest easy, knowing their sons and daughters are on their way home?

The President. You bet. Thanks for asking. As soon as the mission is complete. As quickly as possible, but we've got to get the mission done. I'll tell you, it's—whether it be for the sake of your son who sacrificed or for a son who did not come home, we must complete the mission in their honor. In the honor of your son's sacrifice and service, and in the honor and the sacrifice of those who didn't make it, it's essential we finish the job. It's in our interest that Iraq become a free country.

Think about what a free country will do in the broader Middle East. Think about what the signal will send to the Palestinian people, who must reject corrupt leadership and embrace a peaceful form of government called democracy—true democracy. Think about the example that a free Iraq will set for women in the broader Middle East. I believe everybody desires to be free. I believe that, and it's essential that there be a—an example of freedom in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. If we want to win this war on terror, we not only need to stay on the offense, we need to help nations become free nations. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Yes, ma'am. You're on.

Community Colleges/No Child Left Behind Act

Q. I was excited about your proposal about funding for community colleges.

The President. Yes.

Q. I, myself, have gone back to school.

The President. Good. Thank you.

Q. My daughter is 12 years old. She's been behind in reading all along, but since I went back to school, myself, last fall, she has increased and is reading above grade level at this point.

The President. Fantastic.

Q. My point is that that also—educated parents educate their children better. And that affects No Child Left Behind. Would this funding affect all of community colleges or merely the industrial aspect of community college?

The President. First of all, there's a lot of money going to help people get worker training. We spend billions for worker training programs. What I'm talking about is a specific program aimed at encouraging the job creators and the community colleges to come together to give people the skills necessary to fill the jobs. I mean, there's trade adjustment assistance. There is help. I don't know if you're receiving Federal help or not, but there is all—

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, full scholarships help. [Laughter] Sounds like—full scholarship is more than half scholarship. [Laughter]

She said something interesting about No Child Left Behind. She said, "My daughter was not reading at grade level." Think about that. How do you know, unless you measure? How can a mom say, stand up in front of the President of the United States and say, "You know, my daughter wasn't reading at grade level, and now she's reading above grade level," unless you measure? If you do not measure, you cannot diagnose problems and solve them. That's what No Child Left Behind has done. It gives you the confidence to say, "My daughter is reading above grade level."

Think about a system in which you have no idea. And what happens in a system like that is—is that somebody gets out of high

school, and they can't read. And all of a sudden, that person becomes disillusioned and can't find the work of the 21st century. No Child Left Behind is really a good piece of legislation. We start early in measuring. People say, "Oh, don't test." You've got to test. How can you tell whether or not the curriculum is working? How can a parent decide whether or not her child's school is measuring up to the next neighborhood school? This isn't a way to punish people. This is a way to solve problems. It's essential that we stay strong when it comes to accountability. That's how we make sure children are educated.

Listen, I was the Governor of Texas. I heard them say all the time, "All you're doing is teaching the test." No, we're teaching a child to read so they can pass the test, and we better determine whether or not that child can read. I appreciate you bringing it up. The first teacher—a child's first teacher is a mom or a dad. And you're right, and I appreciate you helping a young child.

Yes, sir.

Possible Reserve Callups/Future of Iraq/Draft

Q. [Inaudible]—I am appreciative of your leadership. We have a son that was in Iraq, in the Marine Corps—

The President. You do?

Q. —he went in—

The President. You don't look old enough. [Laughter]

Q. Thank you.

The President. Certainly, the mom doesn't look old enough. [Laughter]

Q. He went in with the invasion, did 7 months there, came back, and he went back again. He was in the Sunni Triangle, and he's back now, safely, at home.

The President. Good.

Q. I served under your father, in Desert Storm, in the Air Force.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. Right now I'm currently in the Air Force Reserve. And my question to you is, I know the Reserves have more commitment and more responsibilities, and I'm wondering how will that look in the next 4 years for the Reserves?

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. Let me talk about the military. Thanks for your service. He's wondering whether he's going to get called up. Let's get to the bottom line. [Laughter] Yes, that's what I thought. [Laughter]

Here's the goal. The goal is to train the Iraqi citizens so they can do the work. And it takes the—it will take away the need for us to rotate troops in. That's the goal. People say, "What's the timetable?" Let me tell you what's wrong with saying a timetable. You might remember my opponent said, "Well, we'll have them out of there in 6 months." I got on him for that, because you can't send a signal for 6 months. Well, 6 months—so the enemy says, "Fine, I'll wait them out for six months and one day." That doesn't do any good.

You know, if I tell the Iraqis, "Well, we're coming out whether we get the job done or not," then they'll quit. They need confidence that we'll help them do the job. These people have gone from a tyrannical situation to a freedom, and that's hard to do. And you need the confidence necessary to start assuming the obligations of a free society. And that's why it's essential we not send any mixed signals to them and that we're wise about, you know, talking about timetables.

My answer to you, as quickly as possible. But the way to relieve the pressure off of our troops and the coalition troops is to train Iraqis as quickly as possible. We've got 100,000 of them trained now. We've got 125,000 of them trained by—at the end of this year. We'll have nearly 200,000 trained by the end of next year, and that's a significant number of troops and folks to help.

You know, my opponent says, "Well, what we're going to do is get other nations to send troops in." They're not going to go in for the "wrong war." I know these people. [Laughter] I've talked to them a lot. They're our friends. They're not going to say, "Yes, let us sacrifice for the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time."

To answer your question, sir, we're going to do our job as quickly as we can and make sure we get the job done.

Now, secondly, I want to answer something. You didn't ask it, but I'm going to ask it myself. [Laughter] Are you going to keep

the All-Volunteer Army volunteer? And the answer is, absolutely. That is why we increased pay to make the All-Volunteer Army work. That's why we increased housing benefits. That's why we're making sure these troops are skilled.

Secondly, in order to win the war on terror, we need specialized forces. This is specialty work. If you draft, you don't get the specialized force you need. We don't need a draft. We will not have a draft so long as I'm the President of the United States.

Yes, ma'am.

International Criminal Court/Partial-Birth Abortion

Q. I want to thank you, Mr. President, for not joining the International Criminal Court. And thank you for——

The President. Put the mike on that.

Q. Thank you for not joining the International Criminal Court, and thank you for signing into law the partial-birth abortion ban act, which was—[applause].

The President. Thank you. Thank you all. Thank you all. Listen, I understand the life debate. And I believe reasonable people who disagree on the issue can come together for commonsense policy. Banning partial-birth abortion was commonsense policy. People on both sides of that issue recognize the brutality of the practice. My opponent wasn't for the ban. He's out of the—really out of the mainstream, it seems like to me, on that issue.

The lady brought up the International Criminal Court. This is a court based in The Hague, where our troops or diplomats, could be brought before a foreign judge, an unaccountable foreign judge, because of decisions made by our country. I think that would be really bad. I think it would be bad for our troops to have to be, you know, facing an unaccountable prosecutor in a foreign land for decisions that the Commander in Chief made.

Listen, if somebody does something wrong in our country, we've got plenty of justice, and we don't need to be signing up for a Federal—international court. My opponent would join the International Criminal Court.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You see, they talk about, you know, popularity. I don't think you should try to be popular and make bad decisions. That may be popular in certain European capitals to join the International Criminal Court, but I assure you it is unpopular with our military and the diplomats. It is bad policy, and my opponent is wrong in supporting the International Criminal Court.

Yes, ma'am. You. [Laughter]

President's Leadership

Q. [Inaudible] Okay, I'll speak louder. [Laughter] Thank you, President Bush, for your integrity. You're a man of honesty, and I trust you with my life and my family's.

The President. Thank you.

Q. [Inaudible] [Laughter]

The President. That's kind of boiling it down right there, you know? Thank you. I appreciate that.

My job as President is to do a lot of things and make a lot of tough decisions. The job also is to set the right example, to live, you know, a life that will make the people proud. I told the people of Iowa when I was campaigning that if I had the honor of serving this office—if I was given the honor of serving the office, I would uphold the honor and dignity of the office. And I'll do so for 4 more years.

Thank you, sir. Yes, ma'am. They've got a mike coming right behind you. Hope this one works.

Presidential Debates/North Korea

Q. I would like to know when you go in to the next debate, if you would just stand up and tell that opponent of yours exactly what you're saying today. We're behind you. We pray for you.

The President. Thank you. Thank you. You know, I appreciate that. It's what you—that's about the only thing to do, is tell people what you believe. I—the last debate was really interesting. I mean, here we had a fellow who said he's for a "global test" for U.S. policy, that he thought my decision on Korea was the wrong decision. See, let me talk about Korea right quick so you understand.

There was a bilateral relations between Korea and the United States before I became President. We had an agreement. We paid

the Koreans, gosh, I think about \$350 million in fuel oil in the hopes that they would honor the agreement they made. Part of the agreement was they couldn't enrich uranium, and they enriched uranium. And my administration found it out. So I figured that, well, if one bilateral relations failed, maybe the next one won't work, and tried to do something differently to get other nations—you might remember, I've been criticized as being a unilateralist, but here I am putting together a multilateral effort—that means more than one voice saying to the North Koreans, give up your weapons. And perhaps the most important voice in that discussion is China.

And we went down to Crawford, and Jiang Zemin, the predecessor of Hu Jintao, and I sat down at the table and said, "Why don't we come up with a joint declaration, a joint statement that says that the United States and China both think the Korean Peninsula ought to be nuclear-weapons-free." And he agreed, and we said that. And so now we have China involved, not one voice but two. And then we got South Korea involved and then Japan involved and Russia involved. There's five countries now saying the same thing.

So this time if Kim Chong-il decides to renege on any agreement, he's not only showing disrespect for the United States, he's showing disrespect for China. And my opponent says we need to go back to the old days of unilateralism with North Korea. It failed once. It will fail again. And so I believe we're on the right path to convincing North Korea to give up its weapons.

Let me say what else in that last debate. I'm glad you brought up that last debate. He also said—they asked him, was it a mistake to go in—or he said it was a mistake to go into Iraq. And then when asked, "Well, then is it a mistake to have our troops dying there," he said, "No." You cannot have it both ways. You can't have it both ways. And if you try to have it both ways, it sends mixed messages. See, what I—listen, I understand tactics change. But what shouldn't change is someone's core beliefs, because of politics.

All right, I'm getting the hook. I got to go back to Washington. I can't thank you enough for coming. I'm honored to have your

support. Work hard, and we'll carry Iowa and win a great victory in November.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:21 p.m. at the 7 Flags Event Center. In his remarks, he referred to Stan Thompson, candidate for Congress in Iowa's Third Congressional District; Iowa State Auditor David A. Vaudt; Jeff Lamberti, president, and Stewart E. Iverson, Jr., majority leader, Iowa State senate; David Roderer, Iowa State chairman, Bush-Cheney, '04, Inc.; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; former President Jiang Zemin and President Hu Jintao of China; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Proclamation 7824—Fire Prevention Week, 2004

October 4, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Fire Prevention Week is an opportunity for all Americans to learn more about how to avoid fires, as well as how to best respond in case of such an emergency. By making fire safety a priority, we can help limit the devastating effects of fires and enhance the safety of our citizens.

A large majority of fire deaths in the United States occur in the home. This year's theme, "It's Fire Prevention Week: Test Your Smoke Alarms," reflects the importance of installing and maintaining working smoke alarms on every floor of the home. As vital early warning systems, smoke alarms reduce the chances of a fire becoming fatal by approximately 50 percent. Americans can also take steps to reduce the chance of a fire ever starting. These include using electrical devices safely, avoiding overloading circuits, and carefully operating stoves, fireplaces, and space heaters. We should also supervise our children and educate them about the dangers of lighters and matches, exercise care in the storing of firewood and other flammable materials, and obey local burning laws. More information about these and other measures is available from the National Fire Protection Association and the Department of Homeland Security's United States Fire Administration.

Firefighters are among our greatest heroes, and they risk their lives each day to protect our citizens and our homeland. All Americans owe them a debt of gratitude for their courage and dedication. By working to prevent disasters and by being prepared, we support firefighters as they serve communities across our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 3 through October 9, 2004, as Fire Prevention Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate activities and to undertake efforts to prevent fires and their tragic consequences.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 6, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 7.

Proclamation 7825—Child Health Day, 2004

October 4, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Parents play a vital role in keeping their children healthy, and when it comes to helping children make right choices, there is work for all Americans to do. Parents, teachers, faith-based and community groups, and government leaders are working together to counter the negative influences in today's culture, highlight the benefits of healthy lifestyles, and educate children about the consequences of their actions.

By promoting good nutrition and regular physical activity, parents help their children perform better in the classroom and live healthy lives. To encourage healthy families,